



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 8, 2015

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REP. BARNES, OTHER WISCONSIN LEGISLATORS URGE EXECUTIVE ACTION FROM PRESIDENT OBAMA TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

MADISON – Today, Wisconsin State Representative Mandela Barnes (D-Milwaukee) led a group of 27 Wisconsin state legislators in calling on the White House to investigate and pursue all possible options under executive authority to reduce gun violence. In their letter to the President, the legislators specifically urged him to eliminate a loophole that currently allows individuals without a federal license to conduct high volumes of gun sales at gun shows, over the internet, and elsewhere, all without conducting background checks.

“As elected leaders in the Wisconsin State Legislature, we encourage you to investigate and pursue all available options under your executive authority to reduce gun violence that plagues not just Wisconsin, but other states across the nation,” declared the legislators in the letter. “Specifically, we urge you to sign an executive order eliminating a loophole that currently allows individuals without a federal license to sell a high volume of guns at gun shows, over the internet, and elsewhere without conducting background checks.”

Under current law, licensed gun dealers are required to perform background checks for gun sales, and only those individuals deemed to be "engaged in the business" of dealing in guns are required to obtain a license from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). However, the term, "engaged in the business," needs further clarification, as those who sell guns – even large quantities of guns -- at gun shows, over the internet, or elsewhere are not required to be licensed, and thus, are not required to conduct a simple background check.

Clarifying the definition of "engaged in the business" will help ensure that individuals are unable to exploit vagueness in our current regulations and sell guns at a high volume without conducting background checks and without proper oversight from the ATF.

Rep. Mandela Barnes made the following statement regarding the letter:

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“As elected officials, we have a duty to keep our communities as safe and secure as possible from gun violence. However, lives continue to be lost to violent shootings at a shockingly record pace, and elected officials across our state and out nation continue to turn a blind eye to this tragic and growing epidemic.

“While it’s clear that Republicans in Congress and here in Wisconsin have no intention of standing up to special interests who want to maintain the status quo, President Obama can take meaningful action to prevent gun violence through his executive power.

“Our thoughts and prayers are not enough – our communities need real and immediate action to prevent the scourge of gun violence from spreading any further.”

A copy of the letter from the legislators to President Obama is attached to this press release.

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